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# LETTERS

ADDRESSED BY

# J. J. GURNEY

TO

## TWO YOUNG PERSONS

ON THE OCCASION OF

## THEIR LEAVING THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

PHILADELPHIA.

1859.

# LETTER I.

EARLHAM, 12th mo. 11th, 1843.

To ——— & ———:

I AM inclined, without further delay, to offer you a few more of my thoughts on the interesting subject which has lately engaged our mutual attention.

In my last letter I mentioned what I think of the great practical importance of your not being deprived of the membership which you now hold with Friends, until you have made a deliberate choice of some other Christian body, with whom you can fully unite. And I endeavored to show that the negative character of our views is such as to allow of your taking full time for the purpose of further consideration, without the smallest compromise of principle.

In *point of* fact, you have every motive for cool

and quiet deliberation, and not one, that I can see, for haste.

I wish now to observe that this choice of a body with whom you can unite is the more critical, because you cannot take up any new system by *halves*. I am earnest to explain myself on this point, because I think it lies at the foundation of some very serious considerations. I can easily conceive that persons who have been educated in any particular profession of religion, may with propriety, and with no unquiet mind, continue in the same, on the general ground of their being suited by the administration, although they may not fully unite with the whole system with which they are thus connected. It is in the order of Providence that they are where they are, and they may well bear with some doubtful points, for the sake of holding fast that which is good.

But I apprehend it to be an unsound and fallacious step on the part of any persons of mature age, to quit their Providential allotment and publicly to join any other Christian Society, unless they can conscientiously accede to the whole system of such Society—at least to all its main features. I am sure *that this is the* universal understanding of thinking

people on the subject. That any adult person who was known to have joined the Church of England, (for example,) by the rite of water baptism, as administered in that Church, would be considered by an observing and reflecting public to have conscientiously set his seal to its whole system, or at least to all its essential parts.

Such an one cannot fairly, as I think, just sip the cup. He must, if he publicly adopts it as his own, imbibe its contents, even to the dregs.

Now my beloved friends, if this view of the case is just, and just it certainly is, according to my apprehension, you must allow me, in true love and faithfulness, to put the question closely home to your consideration, whether you can conscientiously drink the whole draught which is offered to you by the Church of England? Whether you can with a truly satisfied mind publicly adopt her system as your own.

I begin with that Church because I am aware of your preference for it in some respects; and fully do I unite with you in acknowledging that many excellent and devoted characters who have their place in it, by birth, education, and Providential circumstances, *are to be* found within its borders. With

all such I rejoice to unite in the grand essentials of Christianity, and in promoting those essentials. Nevertheless I think there are many weighty reasons why you cannot safely unite yourselves with that Church — many large features in the system which are at variance with simple, spiritual, scriptural truth.

The first of these features is, its secularity. I observe that in your paper of resignation, you object to the withholding of those ecclesiastical payments, which are established by the law of this country, from the persons who are their owners. It appears to me that Friends, while they quietly suffer the law to take its course in the distraint of their goods to meet these demands, bear a noble testimony to the purity and freedom of true Gospel ministry in refusing to take any active part in the payment of them. Be that as it may, however, what can be more directly in opposition to some of the plainest principles of Christianity, than the acknowledged fact, that the provision made by law for the support of the ministers of the Gospel, has become matter of legal *ownership and property*, that the cure of souls (or at least the reversion of that cure) is an article which can be brought to market, put up to *auction and sold* to the highest bidder? Can the

sincere inquiring Christian venture to give his public sanction to a church in which, offices considered to be absolutely sacred and divine in their nature, are disposed of at pleasure, by worldly politicians who are invested with public authority, or by private patrons equally worldly? The head of this Church is a temporal monarch, who appoints its Bishops, its Deans, its Prebendaries. It is not the Holy Ghost who makes these persons "overseers" over the body of Christ. It is the King or his Ministers; and the latter, for the most part, in all such appointments, if they have one eye open to religion, have before the other eye, politics in view. The crown also in many instances distributes livings, and thus selects the pastors over particular flocks, while in general this selection devolves on country gentlemen, who consider their legal right of thus choosing the Shepherds of the Sheep of Christ to form an important part of their property. A convenient resource it may be for the future maintenance and respectability of their second and third sons. The fact that some virtuous Kings select good Bishops, and that some pious patrons choose good Pastors, is a Providential circumstance, an exception to the general rule, which has not even a tendency to justify the system. That system is directly opposed, in my apprehension, to the eternal prerogative

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true Head of the Church, who ascended up on high, and of whom it was declared in primitive times that He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

The second feature in the Church of England, to which as a Christian I cannot but object, is closely connected with the first, yet not absolutely identical with it. It is, *the root and ground of her ministry* My former remarks have reference to the ecclesiastical appointments bestowed on those who are already ministers of the Gospel according to law. But how do they become Ministers? How are they called to exercise the awful function? How are they invested with their qualification for it? The question is best answered in the words of one of the articles of the Church. See Art. XXIII. "It is not lawful for any man to take upon himself the office of public preaching, &c., before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same; *and those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and* send Ministers into the Lord's

*vineyard.*" The men in authority, here alluded to, are the Bishops, who as already observed are themselves appointed by a merely temporal power. Now can it be consistent with truth and righteousness, that persons like yourselves, who have long known and felt that the true call to the ministry is the call of the Spirit, and that none can rightly send the laborer into the vineyard, but the Lord of the vineyard, the ever present Head of His own Church, should set their public seal to this reversal and treading down of the pure law of God, on a subject of so much practical importance? I think you can hardly do otherwise than answer the question in the negative.

I am aware that the candidate for Deacon's orders professes his trust that he is called of the Holy Ghost, and that the Bishop who ordains the Priest, says to him, (O, awful words,) "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," &c. But does this solemn mockery mend matters? Surely not, but on the contrary greatly aggravates the impropriety, might I not say the iniquity, of such a desecration of the *Holy things* of the Lord Almighty.

Let it by all means be granted that some of the candidates for Deacon's orders do sincerely believe themselves to be called of the Holy Ghost, and that some of those who are thus invested with the Priesthood by the Bishop, are actually assisted and blessed, in the work of the ministry, by the precious influences of the Holy Spirit. Yet again I would say that such a concession has not even a tendency to justify the system. Nor can the excellence of some of those Ministers afford you any sufficient ground for adopting that system as your own. The professed root and ground of it, as it regards the ministry, is directly opposed to Scriptural truth, *and therefore it is not for you who have known better things, to sanction or sustain it.*

The third point in the Church of England, which I have to mention, is the formality of her worship. The grand principle of Christian worship, is laid down by our Lord himself in the words, "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." According to my view of the subject, to worship God in the spirit, is to worship Him under the direct influences of the Holy Ghost; and to worship God in truth, is to worship Him in the very life and substance of religion, as opposed to lifeless shadow or form, as well

as in deep sincerity of soul, as opposed to mere lip service. Now whatever may be the beauty or orthodox correctness of a written and prescribed liturgy, the use of it must, I think, be regarded as at variance in its very nature with such a worship as this. The deeply pious, when so enabled, may adopt the words as their own; yet those words would flow even from their hearts, with more than redoubled force had they been guided into such petitions, independently of all forms, by the Holy Spirit of truth. In the mean time what are we to say to the habitual and very general utterance of such expressions by the worldly, the careless, the carnal, and even the grossly sinful of mankind? Can it possibly be right, does it consist with that eternal law of truth which Jesus proclaimed and exemplified? Can the system possibly be right which leads into such consequences? It is the nature of a formal system of public worship *to take piety for granted in all for whose use it is intended.* Thus, in obedience to form, the Priest deposits in the earth the mortal remains of the most flagrant sinners, as if they were those of Christian brethren, and in the sure and certain hope of the glorious resurrection of these polluted ones into life eternal. Does the beauty of the burial service justify such an anomaly? Can you venture to give your sanction to that fabric of

form which leads into it? Certainly not (as it appears to me) with a truly sound conscience.

I have, in the fourth and last place, to mention the mysticism of the ceremonies which the Church of England enjoins. I allude specifically to her rites of Baptism and the Supper. If I am not very incorrect in my notions of the history of the rite of Water Baptism, it was used by the ancient Jews, by John the Baptist, and by the Apostles, simply as an outward sign, or representation of the inward regeneration, repentance or conversion, which *had already taken place*, being accompanied by a corresponding avowal on the part of the person whose body was thus immersed. It was regarded as the type and overt pledge, but not the means, of inward purification. It appears to me that no such figurative performance in the worship and service of God is required of us under the spiritual dispensation of the Gospel. But the Church of England not only adopts the type, (with the unauthorized variation of sprinkling instead of dipping,) but clothes it with a mystery foreign from its nature; ties the inward grace to it by a bond which no man may separate, and not only blends, but confuses the mere carnal washing with Regen-

*eration.*

It is the oft-repeated doctrine of the Church Prayer Book, that water is sanctified to the "mystical washing away of sin," and the little infant who is sprinkled at his baptism, is declared to be therein "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Such are the emphatic words which tens of thousands of children are made to repeat at school as applicable to themselves, although for the most part they have not the least foundation in truth. So, also, in the latter part of the baptismal service we read as follows: "Seeing now that this child is *regenerate* and *grafted into the body of Christ's Church*, let us give thanks," &c.; and again, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to *receive him for thine own child by adoption*, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church." Now, where is the sound evangelical Christian, or even the man of good sense and common honesty, who will not confess that here we are dealing with falsities, and that these (so-called) regenerate ones are sure to give proof as they grow up to manhood, that they are truly unregenerate, and must be born again of the Spirit before they can enter the kingdom of heaven? Precisely the same mysticism and confusion of two things, abso-

lutely distinct, is observable in the service of baptism for those of riper years.

This, surely, is no venial error, but one which wounds the very vitals of Christianity. Its obvious tendency, and as I believe, its ascertained effect is, to lead mankind to rest satisfied with the form, without paying the least attention to that divine, inward, heart-searching, and heart-cleansing work, which can alone prepare them for a blessed eternity. Surely, my dear friends, you cannot set your seal to a system of which baptismal regeneration (as it is called) forms a leading and inseperable part.

Precisely on a similar principle, the bread and wine received at the Lord's Supper, are no longer the simple symbols partaken of in the remembrance of Christ, but "holy mysteries," and "a banquet of most heavenly food," containing and involving that inward grace by which we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, so as to be truly "one with Christ," "to dwell in Him," and to know Him to "dwell in us."

Now I would suggest for your calm consideration, that to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and to drink his blood, without which there can be "no *life" in us, is* nothing more nor less than heartily

to receive the Saviour into our inmost souls by a living faith, as the propitiation for our sins, as our resurrection and our life, as our spiritual food and sustenance, as our only hope of glory. It is the blessed experience of every true Christian; it is the result of the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit; it is the very life of that communion of heart and soul, which is enjoyed by all of every name and class who love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. To tie this experience to an outward ceremony, as if the substance had no existence independently of the form, appears to me to be fraught with danger, and to be utterly opposed to the whole scope and bearing of Scripture. The tendency of such a view is the same as in the case of baptism, the form and the substance are first blended, next confused, next identified. Thus at last superstition becomes our master, and the lifeless shadow is substituted for the awfully important and saving reality. The late History of the Clergy of the Church of England affords sufficient evidence that these are no idle dreams.

In addition to the points which I have now laid before you, and which are of a permanent character, I must add, that the great prevalence of Puseyism *in the Church* of England, in the present day,

(especially among its younger ministers and members,) does in itself afford a very powerful reason for your not joining yourselves to that body. You may possibly be in no danger of this kind of error yourselves, but it is most seductive in its character, most inviting in its appearance. How can you answer for its effects on your children and children's children?

J. J. GURNEY.

## LETTER II.

EARLHAM, 12th mo. 23, 1843.

To —— & ——:

I DO believe that the more you give of calm and deep consideration to the points thrown before you in my last letter, the more it will be given to you to see that the obstructions to your joining the Church of England are of a very serious and weighty character; that they are in fact such as cannot be surmounted with a safe conscience.

Under this impression I wish, in the present letter, to take a brief survey of the various dissenting odies of Christians, and to enter a little into the quiry, whether it would be safe for you to unite urselves with any of these societies.

I need scarcely say, that here also my own opinion *n the negative*, and whether you agree with me

or not, I know you will allow me candidly to state to you the grounds on which this negative opinion rests.

I begin with the Calvinistic dissenters, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Whitefield Methodists, &c., &c., denominations, which, like the Church of England, severally contain many pious and devoted characters. Nevertheless, I cannot think that you can publicly join yourselves to any of them without some very important sacrifices of principle.

When I call to mind what have been your training and education with respect to religion, and the line of thought and feeling with which you have been long familiar, you cannot, as I believe, be blind to the existence of certain features in the systems of these our fellow Christians, with which you cannot conscientiously unite.

Some of these are the same in nature as the objectionable points in the Church of England, though less perhaps in measure or degree. In your paper of resignation you state your persuasion, that it is lawful for a Christian congregation to support their own minister whilst his time and labor are given up to his calling as such, amongst *them. But has it* never struck you, that the hiring

of ministers on a certain fixed salary, just as a banker hires his clerk, and entering into an agreement with him, that for so much preaching he shall receive so much pay, is a plan which has an inevitable tendency to degrade and secularize the ministry of the Gospel? It lets in the notion, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or at least the exercise of those gifts may be purchased by money, and seldom fails to be accompanied on the part of the *payers*, with an understanding that they have a right to regulate the ministry according to their own will and pleasure. Here then is a double evil, or rather two evils combined; first, a dangerous measure of *secularity*, in connecting the appointment to any particular pulpit with a *pecuniary* SALARY, so that it may naturally become an object of desire and ambition to many a young aspirant, or to many a father, wishing so to provide a living for his sons. And, secondly, a most undesirable subjection of ministers to their flocks, so that in many cases they dare not preach those close and searching doctrines into which the truth would lead them, because their doing so might offend the sensitive minds of the persons from whom they derive their maintenance, and who can expel them from their pastoral function at pleasure.

Opposed as I am in principle to the marriage of Church and State, and to those provisions for the ministers of the Gospel, which are enacted by the laws of the land — acknowledging as I do that what is called the voluntary system, is, on the whole, greatly preferable, and must be regarded as a step in advance, I am far indeed from considering the latter a *radical reform*. It still ties religion to the world, and the Gospel to the pocket; and it is fraught with some tendencies degrading to the ministry of the word, which are peculiar to itself.

Depend upon it, my dear friends, that the axe must be laid to the root of this tree, if we are to enjoy the *very truth* for our inheritance. Depend upon it, that there is no *radical cure* for secularity in the Church, but in the good old doctrine of our own Society, that it is *not* "lawful" to pay for the ministry at all; that the gift of it is as free as the air that we breathe; and that it is the duty and privilege of Christians to come *home* to the full intent and obligation of our Saviour's precept to his disciples, "freely ye have received, freely give." Oh that you may be preserved from turning your backs on this most precious Christian testimony!

*With respect* to the root and ground of the min-

istry itself, I cannot see any distinction in point of radical principle, between these non-conforming bodies and the Church of England herself. In the Church, young men are prepared for the ministry by a course of study (chiefly mathematical and classical,) at Oxford or Cambridge. Among the dissenters the same purpose is served (with a larger proportion of theological study,) at Hammersmith, &c., in Colleges of their own. In the Church the Bishop ordains. Among the dissenters, a few elder brethren in the work invest the young candidate for the clerical office with the legal faculty to preach. Both parties profess a belief that the call and influence of the Holy Ghost are also required, and in both parties this belief is virtually belied by the unauthorized interference of man with that which is, or ought to be, the work, function, and prerogative of Christ alone. One of the many evils arising out of these various methods of making ministers, is the separation of the followers of Christ into two classes, the Clergy and the Laity — the *reverendi* and the *non-reverendi;* a distinction wholly foreign from the nature of Christianity. It belonged to the system of the law to set apart one particular tribe to be devoted to the services of the temple, and to be supported by their brethren from whom *they* were separated. Under the Gospel the

*whole body* of believers are a "royal priesthood," and are called to "offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." A manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. All the living and faithful members of the Church are endued with a measure of the same blessed influence, all are capable of those gifts which are to be exercised under the immediate government of Christ, for the edification of the body and for the glory of God.

In the blessed days of primitive Christianity, the liberty of the spirit triumphed over all obstructions; in the congregation of believers all might prophesy and all be edified. Under the shears of man's wisdom and systems, the wings of the Holy Dove are clipped. The Lord's anointing, no longer free and diffusive as the air, is bricked up in a single narrow channel. The service of the sanctuary is restricted to the tenant of the pulpit, and the lively energies of the body at large are in a very great degree consigned to inaction and spiritual deadliness. Now, however low we may be brought, as a people, however poor and flat some of our meetings may appear to be, it is surely a blessed privilege to occupy a larger, higher ground, and to take a purer, juster *view in reference* to this important subject. Let us

be patient; let us reverently wait upon our Lord; let us bear with long continued silence; let us yield our hearts and spirits to the visitations of his own anointing, and in due season we shall rejoice and sing praise together. We shall reap an abundant harvest of comfort, joy and peace.

Formality in worship is another point which is not confined to the Church of England, with her written sermons and printed formula of devotion. To a certain and considerable extent, it appears to me to attach to the systems of the dissenting bodies. The sermon which must be preached (though it be more or less extempore) at a particular hour, and preached under an agreement with the hearers which is partly pecuniary in its nature, can hardly fail to be often wanting in that divine life, which is the characteristic of a truly anointed and baptizing ministry. So also, there are few things in my apprehension, more dry and unprofitable than extemporaneous prayer, poured forth at stated periods under the same compact, when the Spirit of God does not truly lead into the service. I can hardly believe that you seriously differ from us on these points, or that you can on reflection fully approve of the congregational hymn of prayer or praise in the public worship of God; in which under the excite-

ment of music, numbers are accustomed to profess a deep exercise of soul to which they are in fact utter strangers. Is this practice consistent with that unbending law of truth which is set before us in the New Testament? Is the testimony which Friends bear against it, though it be by a silence which sometimes tries the patience, ill-founded? Surely not.

So far as I am acquainted with the views of the dissenting bodies on the subject of Water Baptism and the Supper, I believe we cannot charge them with mysticism. I am not aware that they ascribe any sacramental efficacy, any hidden mysterious operation to these ceremonies, but simply regard them as the outward sign and recognition of certain important parts of Christian truth and experience. Thus with them, (if I am not mistaken,) they are precisely of the same nature as the washings and sacrifices of the ancient Jews, shadows of the blessed realities of the Gospel of Christ.

But to insist on any mere shadows, types or figures, as part of the worship of God, ordained under the Gospel, is, as I believe, in radical opposition to the delared nature and character of the new and last dispensation. It is a dispensation of *realities*, not of shadows, of spirituality, not of

form. Our Lord laid the axe to the root of all such ceremonies, when He said, in the words already cited, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." No longer are we to conduct our worship like the Jews of old, in the sanctuary or second court of the temple, where were the altar of sacrifice, the candlesticks of gold, the table and show-bread, but we may boldly enter into the *holiest place of all* by the blood of Jesus. There we shall find a direct access to the mercy-seat, and our prayers will ascend with acceptance before God, like the fragrant incense from the golden censer, through the merits and intercession of that Redeemer who is infinitely more precious than the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold. I believe you will find that the Holy of Holies in the temple with its sacred contents, was typical of the great realities of Christian worship, as it is distinguished from the shadowy system of the law, as well as of heaven itself, into which Christ our forerunner is already entered, there to appear on our behalf before the Father's throne.

Such appears to me to be the doctrine of the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews: and we plainly learn from that epistle, that the worship which consists in meats and drinks, and divers washings (or

as in the Greek, baptisms) and carnal ordinances, is fulfilled and forever done away in Christ. On this ground I apprehend that the Christian Societies alluded to, in insisting on certain and more outward types as part of their system of worship, are contravening one of the grand principles of the Gospel, and that Friends in avoiding this mixture, are bearing a noble testimony to simple Christian truth. I observe that in your paper of resignation you call these ceremonies, "divine institutions." True indeed it is that the baptism of John was ordained of God, and that the Paschal Supper was divinely instituted under the law; but I cannot think that the description truly applies to these practices under the Gospel.

First, with respect to Water Baptism, John himself claimed it as his own as distinguished from the inward and soul-cleansing baptism of Christ, which is with the Holy Ghost, adding most significantly, "I must decrease but He must increase. He that cometh from heaven is above all." And our Saviour just before His ascension threw back (as it were) this ceremony upon John, directing his own disciples to look for a far different baptism. "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized, not *many days* hence, with the Holy Ghost." Words of

which Peter was reminded when Cornelius and his family were baptized with the Spirit under his own ministry. That this was the baptism to which our Lord alluded in His last commission to His disciples ("baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,") is I think to be inferred from the spiritual view which Jesus had just before given, or soon after gave of baptism in the passage just quoted; and secondly, from the declaration of Paul, who was an undoubted partaker of the full Apostolic commission, when he thanked God that he baptized but few at Corinth; and added, "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel," &c.

Secondly, with respect to the breaking of the bread and handing round the cup of wine, this practice was not instituted by our Lord; for it formed a regular part of the old Paschal Supper, and was used by the Jews on other more familiar occasions. It appears to me that our Saviour did no more than give to this custom, as it already existed, a particular direction, "this do in remembrance of me;" this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. Precisely in a similar way, after washing His disciples' feet, He declared that they ought to perform the same menial office one

for another; for it was a common custom among the Jews; and they were to observe it in such a way as to prove that they were subject one to another in love. The sum and substance of the latter injunction, was charity, and of the former, the constant remembrance of the Saviour, whose body was about to be broken, and His blood to be shed, for the salvation of souls.

While I feel a tender sympathy with you, my beloved friends, in the anxiety and conflict which you may have suffered in reference to this part of our subject, I do earnestly beg of you not to be anxious about the outward form, the ceremony which can be applied only to the body. Remember our Lord's words respecting one of the very points at issue, "It is the spirit that quickeneth—the flesh profiteth nothing."

Rest assured that if you yield yourselves up in good earnest to the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, you will be safe and happy without any other baptism; and that if you do but "eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood" by a living faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, you will stand in need of no *ceremonial* repast. He will feed you with the

"bread of life," and you shall drink the wine new with Him, at His table, in His kingdom. We are baptized by one Spirit into one body, and "the kingdom of God is not meat nor drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

I trust I have now set before you, with clearness, the obstructions to your joining any of the societies of the Calvinistic dissenters, under the same heads as in the preceding case of the Church of England, viz: Secularity, the root and ground of ministry, formality in worship, and ceremonies.

There are, moreover, two general points of objection which appear to me to be of much practical weight. The first is *predestinarian doctrine*, the second is *party spirit*.

Thoroughly as I approve of a sound evangelical view of the fundamental truths of Christianity, it is much to be regretted, as I think, that such a view is closely connected among the various bodies of Calvinistic dissenters, with a somewhat rigid adherence to the doctrine of unconditional decrees. Without attempting to argue on that deep and mysterious subject, I would just remark that the practical effect of such sentiments appears to me to be unwholesome. They limit the diffusiveness of

Christian charity, often engender presumption on the one hand, and despondence on the other; and sometimes impart a degree of harshness and sourness to the temper.

Greatly preferable in its effects on character, and much more Scriptural, in my opinion, is that grand doctrine of Friends, that, as Christ died for all men, so all men receive through Christ a measure (however small and latent in many cases) of the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, by yielding to which, even in its most humble appearances, they may be brought to fear God, and to believe in Christian truth so far as it is made known to them. On this ground, among whatsoever part of the human family his lot may be cast, the Christian with the Bible in his hands, will find something to which he can appeal in the breasts of his fellow-men, something which will respond to his doctrine when he bids them, as George Fox bade the people, to mind "the light within," that they might thereby be convinced of their own sinfulness, and come to the Saviour in faith, to receive redemption through His blood, "even the forgiveness of sins."

This surely is a precious doctrine, calculated to enlarge the heart in love and charity toward all *men.* *May* you be enabled steadily to cleave to it.

With respect to Party Spirit, much allowance ought to be made for the dissenters who are the excluded party, and are compelled by law to support a religious system which they disapprove. Yet it must be confessed that of late years, while high-churchism has been spreading on one side, a strong and somewhat bitter party spirit has prevailed on the other, and there has been a plunge taken by many of our non-conforming brethren into the strife of politics, which has been far from promoting their highest welfare. Some Friends have had their share in these things; but I am sure that the principles which we profess, lead away from them. We have always believed it right to suffer, rather than contend against the powers that be; and the more we abide under the searching and yet softening influences of the Spirit, the more will this be our practice. Now I heartily wish that you may never be exposed either to the Puseyism of the Church, or to the political striving of the dissenting bodies. The two dangers are perhaps of nearly equal magnitude. Surely you are safest in your *old* position.

Here I wish to acknowledge that there is one sect of Christians, to which neither of the last two objections apply. I mean the Wesleyan Methodist, who agree with Friends in their view of the univer-

sality of Divine Grace, and are nearer to them, in some other respects, than most other denominations. I have a high opinion of the influence of the Wesleyans both in this country and in other parts of the world. Yet I think there are strong reasons why you could not with safety and propriety join their ranks. In the first place their system as it relates to the ministry is liable to the same objections in point of secularity and human appointment as that of the other dissenters. Secondly, there is no sect in which the body at large is more entirely subservient to their clergy, for the Conference of Ministers keeps all the property and all the power of regulating the society in its own hands. And thirdly, I suspect you would soon be far more weary of the frequency of their services and of the multitude of their words, than you now feel yourselves to be of the silent worship of Friends. No, my dear friends, there is no door of entrance open for you here.

Having now taken a calm survey of the difficulties which truly lie in your way, in your wish to connect yourselves with some other Christian body, I must candidly express my own conviction that these obstructions are on every hand insurmountable, and that your only safe conclusion will be still to abide in that part of the fold of Christ, in which Divine *Providence has* placed you.

My sole desire is that you may faithfully follow and implicitly obey the Shepherd of Israel, whose still, small voice is distinctly to be heard in the secret of the soul. As this comes to be more and more your endeavor and your practice, you will, as I believe, yet draw nearer to Friends, in the life, power, and spirituality of the Gospel of Christ. And deeply am I persuaded that if in the fear and love of God you are made willing quietly to withdraw your resignation, you will never find occasion to repent of such a measure; but, on the contrary, it will be in future days, the means of many a rich and important blessing, both for yourselves and your children.

J. J. GURNEY.

P. S.—I would just add, that so long as you read the Scriptures diligently at home, you will not want to hear them in your meetings for worship. The good Remembrancer will often bring precious passages to your minds during your silent waitings on the Lord, for the instruction and nourishment of your souls. The great work, after all, lies between God and your own souls; and if Christ Himself condescends to teach you by His Spirit, you will not be anxious about any human ministry.





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